



# SQUIDFANCY

Fall 2007

the top Squid Lover's magazine in Saudi Arabia

## the Omen

tells you ten surefire ways  
to tame those tentacles

## the TRUTH about calamari:

It actually is quite tasty,  
but don't tell all your  
squid friends

## PLUS

The giant squid at  
Hogwarts tells his side  
of the story:

*an exclusive interview*

"What's that purple spot  
on Squiddykin's right gill?"  
It might be AIDS...



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# TO SUBMIT:

Submissions are due on alternating Saturdays before 5 P.M. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, semaphore, or email. Get your submissions to Lindsay Barbieri, Merrill B103, Box 0542, lkb06@hampshire.edu

"I'm sorry, did you just ask me to SUBMIT something? You wily little fucker. I'll see what's on my hard drive."  
- Aaron Buchsbaum on Submitting to The Omen

Front Cover:  
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# THE OMEN

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Volume 29 • Issue 2 September 28th, 2007

Lindsay Kaye Barbieri

Editorial

# Not Eating + Not Sleeping + Coffee = EDITORIAL

Fuck the mandatory meal plan.

Fuck the faulty sprinkler systems in Merrill.

I don't even like coffee.

So here's the second issue of The Omen. It's full of sex, drugs, (No really, I am going to sprinkle all the Omens with cocaine before I distribute them. And speaking of cocaine, The Prescott 500 is happening this November for the first time in 8 years) and some articles, or something.

Actually, I don't know what this issue is like because it's 4:00pm on a Thursday before layout and no one ever submits anything on time, let alone in advance. Damn Hampshire kids.

There are a lot of exciting things that are happening on campus this week. Many of which will be over before you even read this. One thing that I would like to point out is that Nominations for Student Positions were due this Wednesday, so if you read this and think "Oh shit! It actually might be a good idea to run for something!" you're too late and maybe you should pay more attention to, you know, life instead of, say, smoking so much pot. (Yes YOU - people who live in Merrill A1. I can fucking smell your goddamn pot smoke from The Omen office and it fucking sucks. No seriously, knock it the fuck off.

Speaking of pot, I would like to take this opportu-

nity to explain to you how student elections work. As Hampshire students, you probably smoked a whole lot of pot instead of paying any attention to your high school elections (All those students in governance positions are all, like, fucking puppets for the man or something... let's go get high.) and thus the idea of a student election must confuse you. Here is how student elections work at Hampshire:

There exists a certain Board of Trustees. It's about as "the man" as this school gets, though most of the trustees are pretty cool. The Board of Trustees deals with Hampshire College in the broadest sense. On a more specific level, there are various Committees to the Board of Trustees. There is a committee for Academics, a committee for Student Life, a committee for Buildings, Grounds and Sustainability, and so on. (You can find a full list on the gold colored nomination form you got in your mailbox, or did you use it as rolling paper?) Each of these committees (including the Board of Trustees) has at least one Student Representative member. This student's job is to be The Voice for the student body on issues that committee is dealing with. Here is where you could have come in, except that it's too late now. Good job. Run next year if you give a damn. There is still one important thing you can do. Put that joint down right now and pay fucking close attention to when you can VOTE.



# POLICY

damages a person's reputation.

The Omen will not edit anything you write (except spelling and grammar). You must sign your real name (no anonymous submissions) and understand that you are responsible for what you say. Nonetheless, views in the Omen do not necessarily represent the views of anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

Everything the Omen receives, provided it is sent from a member of the Hampshire community, will be published unless it is deemed libelous or defamatory. Although we find such things amusing and entertaining for countless hours, it is just not an option in this forum. Libel will be considered clearly false or unsupportable writing that maliciously

There is no Omen staff, save those positions of editor-in-chief and layout editor. To qualify for community service you must be a consistent contributor and help regularly with layout. Layout times (and such) will be discussed at our meetings. Meetings are held every Tuesday after release of an issue in the Leadership Center at 6PM. Everyone, everywhere, living or dead, should come.

The Omen loves you.



THE OMEN'S POLICY

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)





# To Be Gay is Not Enough?

by Jacob Lefton

Apparently, being homosexual is okay only if you're not a white male in a position of power, and apparently a gay marriage isn't queer enough. If you arrived early to Ralph and Manfred's wedding reception last Wednesday, you would have seen around a dozen slogans chalked in front of the Tavern:

- "one white man + one white man = consolidation of power"
- "how come I still can't marry my three boyfriends"
- A heart pierced by a penis with the slogan "Queer Terrorism."
- "to be gay is not enough"

There were others too. Some of them asked why we weren't doing more to cure AIDS, or end racism. Others made more reference to the evil institution of monogamy, and still others, well, I don't even remember at this point, but I think the strain of keeping such inane statements in my head for three days would literally kill brain cells.

This obviously wasn't just random chalking, this was specifically targeted at the president. For what? For celebrating his marriage? For being gay but not gay enough? For being white? For being male? For being the college's president?

Some of the chalkers must think, as many of us jokingly speculated, that a major reason we hired Ralph was tokenism. That the powers-that-be in the college were trying to say, "look how amazingly progressive and wildly alternative Hampshire College is!" That us celebrating Ralph and Manfred's marriage will somehow allow us to forget how many more miles we have to go until we have reasonable acceptance and civil rights.

Do they seriously think the celebration of our president's marriage—the first out gay college president to be married—will marginalize their position, because hey, we married gays so that's good enough? Clearly, these people are looking to get offended.

I am reminded of my first intern's opinion of Greg Prince. "I respect him," said Colin Urbina. "I mean, if someone asked me to be the Man at a place that hates the Man, I would have run in the other direction."

People seem to automatically assume that Ralph is not on their side. I can assure you that this is not true, when it comes to issues of social justice. Sure, in the past Ralph may have said some things you or I don't agree with. Give the guy some credit though. He's one of the few white men on campus actively trying to confront and get others to confront racism, among a profound number of issues he cares about.

In the end, all the chalking managed to do was show how completely over the top Hampshire's activists are. It's unfortunate, because the counter-demonstration and the demonstration are really on the same side of a much larger fight against actual enemies—the religious right, the Bill O'Reillys, the

Dick Cheneys and George Bushes. I've found myself laying awake at night hoping that the 'activists' are chuckling to themselves about this article because I didn't realize it was satire. But I don't think that's the case.

And what the hell is up with anti-monogamous graffiti? I've never known non-monogamous people to have so much built up anger at monogamous people that they have to let it all out on the ground in front of a wedding reception—could someone please explain that?

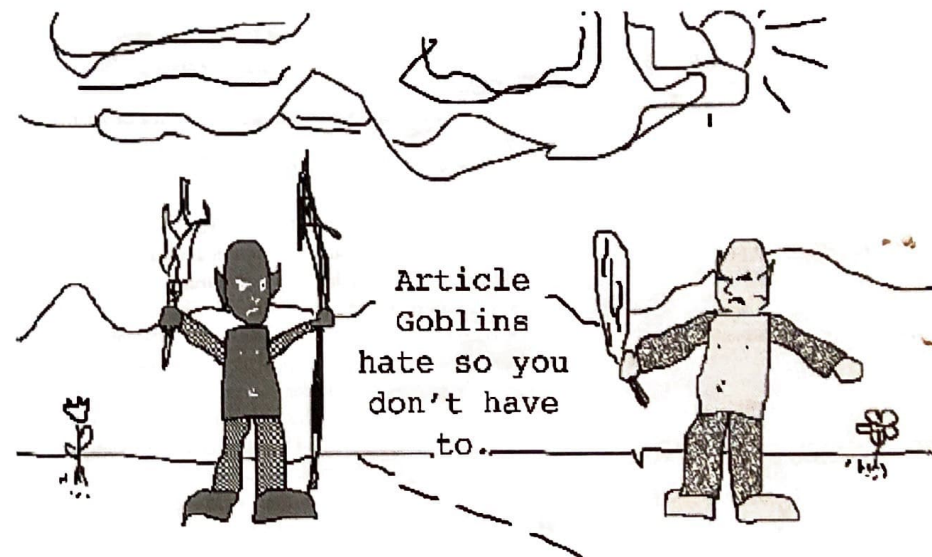


## Anagrams For Hampshire College

by Molly McLeod

Why is there empty space here in the Hate Section? Are you all spineless? Lifeless? If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention.

Shoelace Hemp Girl  
Sacrilege Help Ohm  
Impeachers Hell Go  
Peachier Hell Smog  
Hello Cashmere Pig  
Cheaper Hell Gismo  
Hello Grim Peaches  
Allergic Hemp Shoe  
Spherical Ego Helm  
Impeach Ogres Hell  
A Logic Herpes Helm  
A Chill Emerge Shop



SECTION  
HATE

We hate so  
you don't  
have to.





SECTION  
SPEAKResources For  
Recovering Meat Eaters.

by Mo Karn

Every year at Hampshire there are people who want to know more about animal rights and animal liberation. So I compiled this list of resources to help people out, even when my memory fails.

## Animal Liberation Reading List

If you are interested in learning more about issues concerning animals, animal liberation, animal rights, speciesism, or veganism these are some titles worth checking out. Titles with asterisks are available through the 5 college library system:

- \* Speciesism by Joan Dunayer
  - \* The Dreaded Comparison by Marjorie Spiegel
  - \* Animal Liberation by Peter Singer
  - \* Free the Animals: The Story of the Animal Liberation Front by Ingrid Newkirk
  - \* Animal Ingredients A to Z by the EG Smith Collective
  - \* The Case for Animal Rights by Tom Regan
  - \* Animals Like Us by Mark Rowlands
  - \* Terrorists or Freedom Fighters? Reflections on the Liberation of Animals by Steven Best
  - \* The Pornography of Meat by Carol J. Adams
  - \* The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory by Carol J. Adams
  - \* Neither Man Nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals by Carol J. Adams
  - Vegan with a Vengeance: Over 150 Delicious, Cheap, Animal-Free Recipes That Rock by Isa Chandra Moskowitz
  - The Complete Vegan Cookbook: Over 200 Tantalizing Recipes, Plus Plenty of Kitchen Wisdom for Beginners and Experienced Cooks by Susann Geiskopf-Hadler and Mindy Toomay
  - How It All Vegan!: Irresistible Recipes for an Animal-Free Diet by Sarah Kramer and Tanya Barnard
  - Hot Damn and Hell Yeah! Recipes for Hungry Banditos and the Dirty South Vegan Cookbook by Ryan Splint and Vanessa Doe
- This barely scratches the surface of the material that is available. Try searching under vegan, animal rights, animal liberation or speciesism. There are plenty of books at libraries and bookstores as well as heaps of websites that can help you to learn more about this interesting subject. If you have questions or want to become involved in Hampshire Animal Liberation Advocacy (HALA!) Email [spcibe@lists.riseup.net](mailto:spcibe@lists.riseup.net)



News, Commentary,  
Announcements,  
Propaganda,  
Editorials.

## Shoulda Said!

The Secret Code of Hampshire Students and What They Actually Mean When They Say "Please Stop Smoking Within Twenty Feet of the Building..." and Other Common Phrases.

## The Lord Says...

Submitted by Aaron Buchsbaum

"Would you please smoke 20 feet away from the building?"

*actually means*

FUCK OFF AND DIE YOU ASS-HOLES.

"I'm living off campus."

*actually means*

I fucking hate Hampshire kids... If it wasn't for the degree, I wouldn't be here anymore.

"I'm clean."

*actually means*

I *probably* don't have any STDs. I think I got tested once... maybe.

"I'm a transfer student."

*actually means*

I'm really trying hard to fit in, please don't try to make me become a vegan and I'm sorry I don't use the pronoun ze.

"I'm going shopping for the mod."

*actually means*

I'm stealing food from Sodexo

"I'm writing for The Climax."

*actually means*

I wish were I cool enough to write for the Omen.

"I'm writing for The Omen."

*actually means*

Fuck off, you fucking fuckers.





# Affine Methods for Clustering Strings in Text

by Marco L. Carmosino

September 23, 2007

For this homework assignment, I implemented affine gap distance calculation, in accordance with the prophecy. I added two extra tables to the original calculation: one for repeat deletions, and one for repeat insertions. The "standard" table was initialized as per usual, and the other two tables were initialized as if there was either a repeat delete or insert going into the cell. This was very interesting to write, and I feel as if it made me understand the ideas behind string edit distance and dynamic programming much better than I would have otherwise. For a while when I was trying to write it, I thought that I would have to represent the finite state machine that the algorithm calls for explicitly, in code. When I realized that the FSM is implicit in the order and formulas used to calculate the three DP tables, I became enlightened, and finished the rest of the assignment in short order. This was a very important realization: for my next assignment I want to implement a CFG to CNF converter, and I now have the ability to hide a finite state machine in the magical darkness of a DP algorithm.

In any case, once I had finished the affine gap modification, I compared it to the normal string edit distance algorithm on some made-up examples. As expected, it gave much closer matches for strings with repeated deletes and inserts, such as "Bill fishman Water-house" and "Bill Water-house." One thing that I had to pay attention to during the testing was the values for the costs of operations: to accurately compare the performance of normal string edit vs. affine, I had to change the "d" value in the normal code to 4, using a cost of 3 to open a gap, 1 to extend a gap, and 4 for a normal operations in the affine algorithm. These weights worked out fair-

ly well, though I did consider trying to parametrise them and attempting to learn better ones. I couldn't see a way to do this without supervising results, or a pre-tagged corpus though, so I didn't try. A question: how would I go about learning these weights unsupervised, to maximize performance for clustering and canonicalization? Would I use a dictionary somehow? Or would I need some sort of pre-aligned corpus? What dark tomes must I peruse? What evil gods must I sacrifice to? DESCRIBE TO ME THE LIBATIONS I NEED MAKE.

After trying out the affine gap algorithm on random strings for a while, I asked David for something else to try and wrote a clustering program that uses it on arbitrary text files. The clustering algorithm that I used was naïve and simplistic: running in  $O(n^2)$  time, it takes the affine gap (or plain Levenshtein) distance between all words in the file and stores these in a multidimensional dictionary. I had it filter out all words with edit distance scores greater than 10, hopefully giving meaningful clusters. One thing that occurred to me was that, by increasing the cost of normal operations, I might be able to make the algorithm more fine-grained, and get better "resolution" out of the algorithm. So I compared clustering performance in two fairy tales from the Blue Fairy Book with the following weights on my affine function: (When I tried to run the algorithm on the whole Blue Fairy Book, my computer crashed. This was a message from God. HE was telling me to build, buy, steal, or otherwise acquire a supercomputer, such that my crappy algorithms have all the space and CPU time they need to explode all over the damn stack in peace.)

Run #1: "Lower Resolution?"	
Operation	Cost
Copy	0
Substitute	4
Delete	4
Insert	4
Open Gap	3
Continue Gap	1

Run #2: "Higher Resolution?"	
Operation	Cost
Copy	0
Substitute	8
Delete	8
Insert	8
Open Gap	6
Continue Gap	2

It turned out that I was right about doubling the cost of edit operations: The clusters from the "High Resolution" run were much tighter and made more sense than the "Low Resolution" run. There were a lot of results in the High Res clusters that were rhymes or partial rhymes, aligning on two or three letter sequences at the worst. One thing is certain: without significantly better parameters, a completely different algorithm for clustering, or some way of learning, my current clustering implementation is not appropriate for discovering clusters of words that can then be used for canonicalization. Nothing is appropriate for discovering these hypothetical clusters. The drastic difference that was achieved by just doubling the parameters from low to high resolution leads me to believe that if I could implement an appropriate learning method in the future, some combination of parameters could lead to pretty decent clustering for canonicalization. For now, here are some of the results for low and high resolution clustering on "The Bronze Ring" and "Prince Hyacinth and the Dear Little Princess" from the Blue Fairy book.

Run #1: "Lower Resolution"	
Word	ClusterSize
infirm	319
king	755
ring	820
died	829
wise	733

Run #2: "Higher Resolution"	
Word	ClusterSize
infirm	7
king	144
ring	161
died	166
wise	131

I think that it might be significant that, for all the words except "infirm," in both runs the size of the clusters was in a very similar range. It would be very interesting to try and fit a curve to the average cluster size for ALL words, in this algorithm, as the parameters varied. Perhaps different "groups" of words could be discovered that have similar cluster sizes across many different values of the parameters. I will try this in the future, when I am more powerful. To conclude, this was a very interesting assignment. I learned a lot about DP, and built a "learning toy" grade clustering program based on it. I am very interested in doing more with this program, perhaps adding learning ability and a graph of cluster distributions, with an eye towards making the clusters that it generates suitable for canonicalization.



*The Omen staff members would like to be the first to admit that collectively they only understand approximately 3/5 of this article.*



# Dreams Are Real

by Evan Silberman

I  
Everyone is lonely.  
If you can believe what you read, everyone's been lonely for a long time. Since Ginsberg left Carl Solomon behind at Rockland, since Godot didn't show, back to when J. Alfred Prufrock took his fucked-up walk through the fucked-up streets of London, we've been lonely. It happened pretty fast—no way was Walt Whitman lonely; that guy loved everybody. In 150 years, we go from “For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you” to McCartney lamenting the lonely people over a string octet and Linnell and Flansburgh singing to us that “Everybody dies frustrated inside and that is beautiful” and Grandma Death telling Donnie that “everybody dies alone.” Sociologists write whole books about how we never do anything together anymore; the bowling leagues and bridge clubs and bar trivia nights don't attract lonely souls because lonely is now just how we all are.

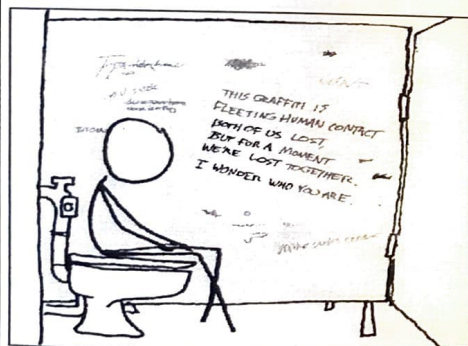
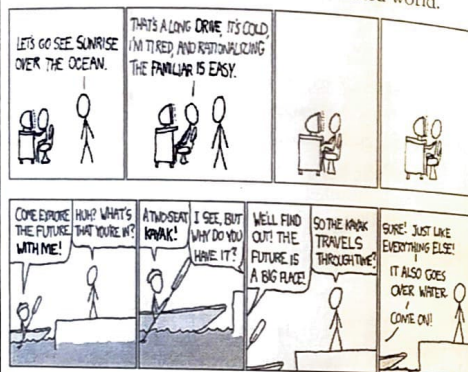
It wasn't supposed to be this way. It shouldn't be. We're in McLuhan's paradise, the Electric Age is bringing us together, we're the new tribal society, the global village. We send e-mails, we IM each other, Facebook and MySpace are keeping us in touch with every friend we ever had and every friend we never had. But until teledildonics becomes mainstream, the Internet is just masturbatory, and not just because of porn. PostSecret isn't an art project, it's a massive turn on, because we're so damned lonely that we can only dream about having someone to share our darkest secrets with. Here in the future, with the technological singularity approaching, openness and honesty turn our cranks like nothing else can. We get hot when we see someone reaching out.

We know deep inside that we don't want to be this way. In the words of the poet, we're burning for the ancient heavenly connection. But we don't know where the connection is anymore. So we have to go looking.

II

xkcd (<http://www.xkcd.com>) is a webcomic writ-

ten and drawn by Randall Munroe. It's a brilliant mix of nerd humor, romantic ideas, and childhood dreams, as interpreted by a cast of stick figures. Most of the strips are clever and humorous, or confusing to those less mathematically inclined. But a few are indicative of a terrible fear of isolation and an implacable desire for adventure, or even contact with an alienated world.



I THINK I LOOK FOR MEANING IN THE WRONG PLACES SOMETIMES.

In March of this year, he published this comic, entitled Dream Girl



The coordinates are those of a jungle gym on a playground in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The date, at the time the comic was published, was in the future: 2:38 PM on Sunday, September 23rd, 2007.

It's hard to know if Munroe had any idea what the impact of this comic would be.

Soon after the comic went up, members of xkcd's forums began wondering if something would happen at that point in space-time. People announced their intention to show up at the playground at the appointed time. A thread, and eventually a separate board, to discuss plans for a meetup appeared. A Facebook event for the meetup had upwards of 500 people listed as “attending” before it disappeared around a week ago. People began booking flights, buying bus tickets, and planning carpools.

The comic itself seemed to discourage the whole enterprise: “It turns out wanting something doesn't make it real.” But the lonely people planning to converge on the jungle gym that day were determined to make it real for themselves.

III

I was one of those lonely people. An avid xkcd reader, as soon as I got wind of the meetup, I determined that I would be at the appointed spot at the appointed time. I knew that whatever was going to happen, it would be momentous and thrilling, even if nothing happened. As long as there were other people there, people to connect with, I was going to be happy. When it came time to decide where I was going to go

to college this April, Hampshire's relative proximity to Cambridge was a factor causing me to pick it over Oberlin. When I got here, my half-hearted attempts at finding a ride didn't pan out, so I bought a Peter Pan Bus round-trip ticket to Boston at the more-or-less reasonable price of \$44.

Laughing in the face of centuries of Jewish tradition, I left for Amherst early on the morning of Yom Kippur. Walking. For future reference, kids, the 38 doesn't run until 10:30 or so on Saturday mornings. But the walk up 116 was pleasant enough, and I plunked myself down in front of 79 Pleasant Street to await the arrival of my chariot. And by chariot I mean bus.

I spent Saturday with some friends at Harvard and MIT. The details are of no interest to you, dear readers, other than that, if you were not aware, Harvard is really fucking nice. They have nice things, like chandeliers and statues and waffle irons that imprint the Harvard seal into your waffle. Really.

IV

Sunday, September 23rd. The Day Of. Around 1:15, I left with my gracious host Charlotte (Thank you Charlotte!) for Rev. Thomas J. Williams Park, about a half hour walk down Mass Ave from Harvard. At least that was its official name. I would soon discover a carefully drawn sign reading “Randall Munroe Sweetass-Park” attached conscientiously over a legit sign. But that was not the first thing I noticed.

No, the most immediately obvious feature of Munroe Park around 1:45 was the jungle gym. First of all, it's a really sweet jungle gym. It's a bit hard to describe, but it consists of a UFO-shaped frame with ropes tensed between its vertices in a three-dimensional web of squares and hexagons. But that was not even the most obvious feature of the jungle gym.

What attracted the eye to the jungle gym were the several dozen people occupying it.

When I joined the crowd on the ropes, I was provided with a list, on which I was name number 71.

This was still early.

I was resolved to introduce myself to people as



much as possible, and so I started with a young man named Scott, who said he had recently graduated from Brown. He told me, "I don't have a place in the real world yet." It got me thinking about my eventual place in the real world, about society's expectations that I get a job and develop a career and live like the middle class white Jew boy that I am. And I thought that maybe I didn't really want a place in the real world.

But I digress.

As the minutes ticked by, people flooded the park. Nerds, geeks, and dorks from all over showed up, long hair tied back (or not) and T-shirts nerdy. (Quote: "I think every nerd shirt I've ever seen on the Internet is here.") I joined in for a while with a game of "Wah", which is loud and spirited and entirely frivolous. Loud, spirited frivolity being approximately the nature of this whole enterprise.

A young man by the name of Jesse had purchased spray paint and a pile of T-shirts, and crafted a variety of stencils out of cereal boxes. He was selling custom shirts for \$10 apiece. He told me that he only recently learned the subtle art of shirt stencils, having been taught by the people he went to Burning Man with.

Burning Man.

Someday.

The appointed time approached. 2:38 PM ticked closer. Hundreds upon hundreds of nerds filled the park. The piles of happy people filling the jungle gym counted down the minutes. With a minute to go, Randall entered with a team of friends carrying whiteboards. The final seconds were counted down. The crowd cheered wildly.

"What do we do now?" someone shouted.

V

Randall addressed the masses. The following transcript is approximate.

"Hi everybody."

Cheers.

"Thanks for coming."

Cheers.

"So I drew this comic, and in the end nothing happened. The girl didn't show up. But it looks like some-

one did show up."

Cheers.

"I guess wanting something does make it real."

Wild cheers.

"So the comic is wrong, so we're going to fix it. I drew the first few panels on this whiteboard, and we've got about 20 Sharpies and we're going to fill in the rest."

And so we did. I don't know if there are high-resolution photos of the end result anywhere; I certainly hope there are.

There was more of course. Tape-measure-extending competitions went down. Red spiders bedecked trees. People generally hung around being friendly and happy. Sidewalk chalk was produced, and people wrote theorems and Perl programs on the sidewalk. A raptor attacked, and was repelled with swords.

Randall signed a page of my Moleskine notebook and drew in it. He also signed a Guitar Hero controller, a number of dollar bills, a mattress, and at least one pair of breasts.

In a word, it was epic.

VI

I left with Charlotte around 4:00 PM. The crowd had begun thinning out, but plenty of people were still walking around, talking, connecting.

Eventually, though, everyone had to leave the playground, and return to their places in the real world.

Visit Flickr and search for the tag XKCD-dreams for pictures.



### Continuation of the Staff Box:

Enrique Van Slyke	Maggots
Lydia Mills	Chain Chomp
Marco Carmosino	Venus Fly Traps
Sarah Arrigo	T.V.
Awesome Girl	Says We're Awesome

# Trustee Town Hall Meeting

by Jacob Lefton

As you read this, if it's Friday or Saturday, or even Sunday, I am near Santa Rosa California advocating on your behalf. I'm the student trustee, at the trustee's annual board retreat—where they remove themselves to some swanky setting so they can really *think*, and this year, we're thinking seriously about the future of the college.

Before I dive into this, let me give you a recap of this past Monday, when trustees Hosea Baskin and Meredith Miller, along with Renee Freedman, Hampshire's first staff trustee, and I held a town hall style meeting about the role of the board in the college and the importance of their connection with students.

Here are the three main roles of the board:

1) To make major policy decisions about the college, which will be implemented by individuals and groups lower in the hierarchy of the college.

2) To insure that policy is being implemented correctly, again, without getting to wrapped up in the nitty gritty aspects.

3) To hold the fiduciary trust of the college. The buck stops there. Should the institution suffer financial difficulties, it is on their shoulders.

Members of the board care a great deal about what students think, and, to paraphrase Mr. Baskin, they are thirsty for students' opinions. They pay serious attention the student trustee, the alternate, and the student representatives to the committees. Here's a list of the committees:

- Academic Affairs Committee
- Admissions Committee
- Committee on Buildings, Grounds, and Environmental Sustainability
- Development Committee (fundraising)
- Finance Committee (oversees finances)
- Subcommittee on Investment Responsibility (CHOIR)
- Committee on Profile & Identity
- Committee on Student Life

They're pretty self explanatory. Vote in the election that will be happening in a few days—definitely before October 5th, which I think is Friday. I'm serious—the people you vote for these positions are your liaisons to the people who make broad sweeping policy decisions. These are the people who ultimately have control over the course of Hampshire college. If you really care, you'll pay attention.

This year, we're going to try to make it easier to pay attention. Here's a list of things to look for:

-- We want to make available the email addresses of the chairs of different committees. They're personal e-mail addresses, so I'm going to ask nicely. Or maybe I have already asked nicely, if it's Sunday.

-- We're going to figure out a system of posting online where and when committee meetings are happening, and what their agenda is.

-- We're also going to put up the revised mission statements of the different committees.

Hopefully we can open up some clear channels of communication between students and the board of trustees. That job largely falls to me. As there are currently no channels at all, it will take some time and effort for us to put some in place that can be codified for future students to use. Hopefully we can establish some sort of continuity between elections.

And why so much emphasis on the committees? Well, barely anything goes before the board that hasn't been in front of one of the committees first. If students want to interact with the board in any serious manner, this is the way to do it.

That said, keep your eyes peeled for more opportunities to chill with trustees and tell them your opinions and experiences. They'll be here for Family and Friends weekend, and then there's another board meeting in February. We're going to try to get them to engage with the community then. In the meantime, we'll try to keep having town hall meetings like the one on Monday.





## The Soames Club

by David Axel Kurtz

The writing classes we take are designed to help us improve the quality of our writing. Some of us may need it, others may not. Yet when the story or the essay is finished, handed in & then returned, it may as well be landfill for all that we usually do with it.

What a waste.

We cannot forget that writing better is only half the battle. We cannot forget that, until someone reads a piece, it remains unappreciated, untested - in short, unfinished. I believe that, if someone likes a story, there is a chance that other people might like it as well. I believe that, if YOU like something you've written, then you should give other people the chance to like it too. Else, why do we write?

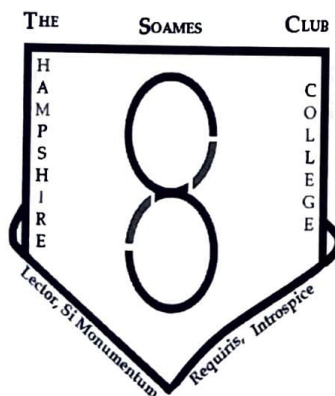
If we are to be more than secret diarists, the masturbators of the world of ink and pen, our work must be made available. Whether hardcover or paperback, RandomHouse or Shambhala, The Paris Review or The Five College Reader, we owe it to ourselves to try to get published. And we owe it to each other to help each other as we each struggle to reach this vaunted goal.

Enter the Soames Club, a by-students-for-students organization dedicated to improving, not the quality of our student writing, but the availability thereof. From query letters to contract negotiations, from publishing house comparisons to marketing strategies, we will pool our knowledge and tackle all of these problems in all their annoying splendor.

Nobody will do it for us. So let us do it ourselves.

Unfortunately, due to the vagaries of Hampshire's communications networks, this group shall not for this semester be called an official Hampshire organization. Yet since it is an organization entirely by and for us students, I see this as no impediment at all. If you are interested in joining this group, or would simply like more information, please eMail me at [dak06@hampshire.edu](mailto:dak06@hampshire.edu). Regular meetings shall begin forthwith. Published or unpublished, fiction or nonfiction, Div III or sort-of-somewhere-around-Div-I, we will be equal. It is no easy task we set for ourselves, getting published and getting known, and it shall fall entirely upon our shoulders to see it through. Yet as all those aspirant writers (like myself) know only too well, the burden is already on our shoulders, our and ours alone.

Let us then do our best to carry it together.



Come to Excalibur's  
GAMES NIGHT in the  
Merrill Living Room  
from 7:00-9:00pm every  
Wednesday.



## The Last Day of Classes Spring 2007

by Stephen Morton

The last day of classes was a busy one last semester. A number of issues were aired, the importance of which varies and can be discussed, and then we all went home. The issues were left behind, largely undiscussed and forgotten. This article represents an attempt to resurrect the discourse, to recap what happened, and why, and present these issues back to the community. The Omen hopes that, in doing so, a sense of continuity with the previous semester can be created where there would otherwise be a conspicuous lack, and that the Hampshire community can discuss and deal with the issues as appropriate.

There are three sets of issues and events which should be addressed.

The first of these is that of identity based housing. This is a issue which had been controversial for some time and slowly built up until it was cut off by the end of the semester. The core issue is this: should Hampshire have identity based housing? This issue was raised and driven primarily by the actions of Justin Lutz, at the time a first year student here and now starting his school year as a transfer student at Sarah Lawrence College. In mid-March, he posted to the hampshire livejournal community <http://community.livejournal.com/hampsters/>, about starting a White Students mod. Heated discussion was provoked as intended, and things went on for a while. Eventually, for their final issue of the semester, April 25, the Climax put together the idea for a point/counterpoint piece on the question of identity based housing.

Justin was the logical choice to approach for writing the side against identity based housing. The Climax also contacted a number of other individuals in an attempt to find a someone to write in defense of identity based housing, most prominently Students of Under-Represented Cultures and Ethnicities (SOURCE). No one responded positively to these attempts, and the approach to SOURCE was met with accusations of racism. The

Climax decided that, in the absence of a counterpoint, the best course of action was still to publish Justin's article.

This provoked the administration to author a response, directly attacking Justin's article and the Climax, which was sent out to all of Hampshire though the critical announcements email system. It can be read in its entirety at [http://www.hampshire.edu/upl/fpg\\_127\\_8863\\_1178291634.pdf](http://www.hampshire.edu/upl/fpg_127_8863_1178291634.pdf). This was sent out on May 4, the last day of classes. In it, the administration reconfirms their commitment to identity based housing, and makes the claim that the Climax article was not properly presented as to establish that it was a work of opinion, as well as taking on the writing itself.

In response, the Climax authored a response, which was sent out to all students on May 8. It can be read in its entirety at <http://climax.hampshire.edu/0703/Climaxresponse.pdf>. In it, the Climax defends its decision to print the article, the presentation of the article as opinion, and contends that the way in which the administration deconstructed Justin's article did not adequately address the content of the article, but served to only be largely personal in nature, and dismissive.

The second issue revolved around the question of cultural appropriation. Some students presented the argument that the majority of students wearing mohawks and dreadlocks did so in ignorance of their cultural significance in the cultures which they originated. They organized an event on the Library Lawn in which students would come and, in recognition of the inappropriateness of this cultural appropriation, have their mohawks and dreadlocks shaved off. This event took place on May 4, the last day of classes. In counter-protest, other students organized an event, taking place across from the first, in which students would be able to get a mohawk. Naturally,

continued on page 16



# Erotic Stories of Adjudicating Clinical Birth Control in My Family Tree

by Zaike Airey

*Because in these confused and tumultuous times, all I can really be sure of is that when I open The Omen, I want some damn free porn. This is dedicated to those who would agree with me.*

They watched each other masturbate; he was on the sink with his hand and a bottle of lotion. She was sprawled out in the bath tub with a removable shower-head. *Don't come*, she told him through short breaths. So he stopped -getting close anyway-and crawled over to her. He kissed her shoulders and neck and back, and she sighed *hmmm*. He couldn't know what she was feeling, but the way her thighs shook and her free hand wandered over her breasts and stomach made him smile empathetically. He kissed down between her collarbones and to her swollen nipples. He licked around them and down her abdomen -she giggled when he tongued her belly-button- to her short pubic hairs. The warm water from the showerhead flowed into his mouth as he kissed around her thighs. *Oh, Darling*, he whispered and she clenched her abs and grabbed the hair on the back of his head and pulled him up to look her in the eyes.

He couldn't help but grin at her flushed cheeks and slacked jaw and the way her blue eyes went wide, glassy, and looked deep into him.

She dropped the shower head and closed her eyes. Her hand slid down the back of his neck and his chest and his abs and he had forgotten about his erection until she wrapped her fingers around it. The head pressed against the cold porcelain tub and he gasped. The young woman turned her head to smile at him, and told him how good it was. He told her how much he loved watching.

She turned off the shower and slowly stood. *I want to watch you now*. She reached for a towel and quickly dried her short hair. He sat back against the bathroom door and took himself in hand. He slowly stroked and watched her dry her shoulders and small breasts, her stomach and thighs. His penis was swelling now,

and she closely watched his hand sliding the length of it. Placing one foot on the toilet seat, she gently dried her vagina and ass. She smiled because he started masturbating harder and couldn't take his eyes from between her legs. She turned coyly, and bent over to dry her feet, giving him a view. *Oh, God*, he moaned.

*Stop*, she told him.

*Why?* He whined.

*Because I want you to meet me in bed, and I want you to come on my ass....*

*Okay.*

She helped him stand, letting him brush against her vagina when he did. *I love you*. She kissed him hard. She kissed his neck and chest and nipples before walking him to the bed in the next room. She crawled onto the freshly-laid sheets and looked over her shoulder at him. *Hmm?* He crawled behind her and firmly ran his tongue up and between her labia, the crack of her ass, up her spine and her neck. He felt her shudder as he brushed the head of his penis against her pussy. He rocked back onto his knees and grabbed the base of his cock, pulling back the foreskin and pushing the tip just inside of her. He moaned, and she gasped

*oh, baby*

He began slowly masturbating, the smell and feel and sight of her pussy and asshole edging him closer to orgasm. She rocked her hips in small circles, pushing back to take his head in. He stroked himself faster now, and could feel the first warm wave of orgasm in his pelvic muscles.

But before he came, a muffled buzz and then a washed-out voice echoed from the living room.

*Hey guys. You there?*

The lovers looked at each other blankly before falling into fits of laughter.

*Hey Toby! Alice! I've been calling but you didn't pick up your*

*phones. You better not have forgotten about me!*

*This is going to be interesting...* grinned Alice, as she reached for the cell phone on the bed stand. *Two messages. Should I call him?*

Toby nodded with a slight smile on his face. She redialed the intruder's number.

*Max! Sorry I missed your calls. Me and Toby got... wrapped up preparing for you and forgot you were going to call.*

Toby stepped off the foot of the bed and knelt behind Alice, pulling her closer to him and planting a wet kiss between her thigh and vagina. She moaned slightly into the phone.

*Uh...yeah. Haha, I guess we are a little excited. Good! I'll ring you up.*

She paused, listening for a moment.

*Oh you do, do you?*

Toby ran his tongue slowly around the lips of her vagina, tasting her.

*Oh, God, Tobe!* She spoke into the telephone. *What do you think he's doing to me right now...? You're almost right. He has me on my hands and knees on this bed up here, and he has my legs spread wide, and he...*

Toby slid his tongue inside of her. She moaned loudly.

*Well, you're just going to have to find out for yourself.*

She hung up the phone.

*How do I taste?* Alice asked.

*Wonderful*, said Toby, sliding his tongue in again.

Toby stood, and walked into the living room to buzz their friend in. He unlocked the door and told Max to come up. He went back to the bedroom to find Alice in the same position, rubbing her clitoris and groaning into a pillow. He told her she was beautiful, and that Max was coming up. Toby wrapped a towel around his waist that did little to conceal his erection, and Alice slid into a pair of purple and black striped panties. They had picked out their outfits earlier that evening.

When Max got upstairs the couple was sitting in the living room, kissing.

*You two are so hot*, he said, closing the door behind him. Alice and Toby stood, and both gave their friend a warm kiss. He had brought a bottle of Grenache. Alice offered to open it. The men sat on the couch and watched as she walked into the kitchen.

*Alice...is a beautiful woman*, said Max. She was in the kitchen, breasts bouncing as she tried to uncork

the wine.

*She really is...* Toby nodded. Alice looked up at the men and smiled. She uncorked the wine. She leaned back against the refrigerator and raised her free hand to her breasts. She brought the bottle between her legs, and corking it with her thumb, began slowly rubbing it against her crotch. Toby and Max watched, awe-struck, as she closed her eyes and started breathing heavily. Alice leaned over the kitchen table, and continued pleasuring herself with the smooth surface of the bottle. Max looked Toby up and down. *You're hard*, he told Toby. He was bulging through the white towel. Max slowly placed his hand on Toby's bare knee, and slid it up his thigh. Toby sighed, and spread his legs wider as Max lightly grabbed the swollen head and began masturbating him. Toby unwrapped the towel so that Max could see his flushed organ, with pubic hairs neatly trimmed. Alice watched the two as she slid the bottle back and forth against her panties. She watched Max lean over and take her lover's penis in his mouth, sliding the length of it into his throat. Toby arched his back and moaned. Max's tongue pressed hard against the flesh between the bottom of the head and the shaft. He tasted Toby's precum, and slid him all the way in once more, before slowly pulling Toby out of his mouth. They kissed, and turned back to Alice who was staring intently and still humping the bottle.

They all grinned sheepishly, and Alice brought three glasses and the wine into the living room. She sat between the men; *Break it up, you two!* and filled everyone's glass. She leaned into Max, and kissed him deeply. *I'm glad you're here*. She leaned over to Toby and kissed him, too. They all sipped their drinks and Alice placed her hand on Max's crotch. He was clearly hard through his jeans, and she unfastened his belt buckle. She felt Toby lift her left leg and hook it over his knee. She did the same with her other leg, placing it on Max's knee. She told them how wet she had made herself with the bottle as she pulled Max's erection out of his pants and began stroking it. Toby said he wanted to see, and the men pulled Alice's panties down to her knees. The crotch was coated with her cum. Toby slid his hand up her thigh and between her legs, feeling the moisture inside of her with his fingers. Max kissed and nibbled her ear and neck as she slowly beat him off.

Then he stood and knelt in front of Alice, lifting her legs to remove her panties. Toby was slowly



fingering Alice with his middle and ring fingers. He pulled them out, offering them to Max, who took them in his mouth and sucked them dry.

Max turned the underwear inside out, and began rubbing Toby's cock with them. He kissed Alice's stomach and a trail down to the inside of her thighs. She smiled, and turned to Toby who also smiled before bending to lick and suck her breasts. Max gently kissed Alice's lips. She was very wet, and he spread her legs wider to look at her pussy. He licked her from her ass to her clit. He took her lips in his mouth one at a time, and sucked them from bottom to top. Alice writhed and grinded into his mouth as Toby watched them. He felt a drop cum drip out of him and into his lover's panties.

Toby told max *stop*, and smiled. Alice rolled her head to look at him. She asked him if he wanted to watch.

If so, what?

Sixty-nine?

The lovers stripped Max naked and laid him down on the carpeted floor. Alice straddled his face, turned away from him. She bent forward to take his penis in her mouth. Max propped his head up on a pillow so he could reach her, and they started slowly going down on each other. Toby sat on the couch, and watched Max sliding his tongue as deep in her as he could manage. He watched Alice tease Max's head with her tongue before swallowing him whole.

Max laid his head back and moaned loud. Toby could hear the moist smacking sounds of his lover and best friend pleasuring each other. He watched Max's face, his penis disappearing in Alice's beautiful mouth, and crawled onto the floor. Toby positioned himself behind Alice, and Max licked the bottom of his shaft. He dipped the head of it into Alice's dripping vagina before returning it to Max's mouth. When he slid it inside of the woman again, he pushed deep. She begged Toby to fuck her faster, and he did, pulling her hips back to take him all the way in. An ab-clenching pulse went through his pubic muscles and up to his stomach and chest, but he held on. His jaw dropped. He breathed slowly. When he pulled out, Max licked Alice's cum off of him, and watched her take him in again. Max tried to kiss her clit, but couldn't reach, so Toby sat on the couch with Alice on top of him and facing away. As she slowly slid up and down his shaft, Max gently took

her swelling clitoris in his lips. She groaned *oh god, oh god, oh god*.

A warm tongue was licking large and small circles around her clit. Her head fell back and she breathed sharp breaths into Toby's ear. The muscles of her pussy and abdomen flinched and clenched around him. She could hear her heart pumping blood. The stimulation was almost too much, but she bit her lip until the edge wore off and all she could feel was hot tingling radiating from her vagina to her toes.

*Oh Jesus!* She moaned. *If you keep doing that, I think I'm going to come.*

Toby was deep inside of her and thrusting rhythmically, and Max was still licking fast circles around her clitoris. Toby could feel her muscles grip around him, and she reached up and behind his head, grabbing his short hair. She rode her lover slowly, feeling every inch.

*I'm coming.* Her back arched and she screamed as the orgasm washed through her her whole body shuddered and she couldn't breathe

The trio sprawled out on the carpeted living-room floor, sweaty. Max had spilled his glass of wine, smearing deep purple across the white rug. No one cared. When their bodies had cooled off, they rolled up in a large plush blanket and wrapped their arms around each other. Max kissed Alice's neck and back and Toby lightly kissed her lips. She hooked her leg around Toby and grinded her ass against Max. Their light breathing turned deep and heavy; they took in each other's smell and exhaled long and hot. Toby's hands traced the soft outlines of his lover's body, meeting Max's at her wide hips. They interlocked fingers for a brief moment before letting go and continuing to explore the woman.

Alice sighed warm into Toby's mouth. She reached her hand behind to Max, pulling his body against hers and felt the hairs on his leg stand up. His lips on her neck sent liquid shivers down her spine, across her shoulder blades and through her arms. Max's fingers traced small circles and loops across her stomach. They gently pulled her pubic hair and brushed against her vagina. She could feel Toby's erection pressed against her ass, and she took it in her hand, guiding it between her legs to feel the length of it against her. Max's hands found it, and pulled the shaft firmly against Alice's moistening pussy. The lovers gasped and Max grinned before biting Alice's earlobe.

*continued on page 16*

Jericha Senyak's

# Dear Hampshire, Could We Have Better Sex Please?

Volume 2: Written January 29th, 2007

I've been reading the vituperous sex column *Savage Love* from the tender age of thirteen. It was better back then, before Dan Savage decided to use the precious column space previously dedicated to discussing bukkaki and other generally unpleasant sexual interactions to bleat and whine in none too eloquent a style about politics - dear Dan, you're a sex columnist, we don't give a flying fuck about anything you say not involving genitals. I mean, the occasional mention of important issues regarding gay rights or abortion is dandy, but just on a personal note, I'd really rather learn about the etiquette of escaping threesomes when it turns out that one partner is not the sex you thought he/she/it was than read your tedious announcements about your campaign donations to worthy and righteous causes...

Okay. Rant over. The point is that Dan Savage, along with the deeply wonderful and heinously filthy writers Henry Miller and Philip Roth, provided me with an early and eager sexual education that really didn't have much to do with those luminously-lit movie sex scenes showing pretty people's abdomens. Dan Savage had a yearly contest dedicated to 'worst masturbation stories'; Henry Miller, writing in the 30s, creates the most explicit, cold-blooded, dirty sex scenes I have yet to come across (in one, he notices that some change has fallen out of the purse of the girl he's fucking, and he makes sure to grab a couple nickels for bus fare home while still merrily porking away); Philip Roth's teenage protagonist in *Portnoy's Complaint* masturbates with a piece of liver, puts it back in the fridge, and sits down with his family later that night to eat it for dinner - and none of these are tongue in cheek, okay, this is just what HAPPENS. I'm thirteen, fourteen, barely been kissed, and oh man, they're talking about cunts. So my sexual education was a literary one, and let me tell you it was far more graphic than any physical initiation short of a gangbang could have been. (Can I make jokes about gangbangs, or is does that, like, cross boundaries better left uncrossed?) So. I learned a lot about sex, discovered it was way more interesting than anything anyone else was talking about, and made a point of going out and learning more about it. By which I don't mean flashing the neighbors, but rather devouring any book with an even remotely sexy cover picture.

Anyway, I started talking about sex a lot, and people started coming to me for advice. And as someone who's had a fair amount of sex in her life, none of which I regret and nearly all of which was really pretty fantastic, I feel at least somewhat qualified to continue talking about it. I'm therefore setting myself up as an unofficial Agony Aunt (to use the catchy British term - infinitely better than our clunky 'sex columnist'), and I will be distilling my thoughts about sex in weekly installments as long as I have the time (and hey, dispensing advice is always a more pressing concern than that paper I have to write, so it's likely to continue.) Thus, feel free to message me with questions/comments/concerns/thoughts/ideas concerning the lovely act of coitus, and I'll put you in the column - I promise utter anonymity, and I won't be mean, I swear.

Okay. So it was in the lurid novels of Anne Rice that I discovered sensuality - mostly hot vampires making out, but there's plenty of delightfully dirty stuff if you open anything she's ever written. She has this lush, dense prose style that's rather like being in the center of a rose garden on a warm summer day - a little overwhelming, not to mention overbearing. Anyway, it struck some chord in me, so off I went in pursuit of sensuality. Now, these days, we tend to equate naked sexuality with pornography and the slightly subtler idea of sensuality with erotica, but sadly it doesn't work like that. You want to know what the difference is between porn and erotica? It's simple, and don't let anyone tell you different: erotica is pornography with mood lighting. Now, I happen to like mood lighting. I like mood music, too, and black lace underwear and aphrodisiac perfumes, though that's just personal preference. But I tend to find erotica kind of mawkish - it's ever so precious, oh-no-we're-not-pornograph

y-we're-empowering-women, self-conscious, usually badly written. And pornography I just find silly (I mean, you don't see closeups of balls banging against your ass when you're actually having sex, unless you're into some kind of contortionist shit I don't know about, and so seeing it happen in a poor-quality online video doesn't really have anything to do with the sex I'M having, or would like to be having, and therefore has very little erotic value for me, but maybe I'm



missing the point - would someone like to illuminate me?)

So where's the damn sensuality? As far as I can tell, it's just been swamped under the bad writing. Nobody I know has sex that's anything like either erotica ("I quivered with pleasure as his tongue caressed the tight little buds of my nipples") or pornography (all those girl-on-girl pornos where they finger each other with really long acrylic nails? let me tell you, those ladies have no fucking nerve endings left up there, because that would fucking HURT). Most people just have sex, it's sex, it can be good or bad, whatever, but rarely is it sensual.

I'm making a plea for the return of sensuality. For the orchestration of pleasure. I am a sensualist - I love the sensations the body is capable of enjoying, and I do my best to exploit that capability to the fullest. But what actually makes something sensual? Where does sensuality, as opposed to just sex, arousal, desire, ~~whatever~~, actually lie? Well. As far as I can tell, it works like this: sex in America has become a hurried affair. Everybody just wants some ass. Nobody lingers any more. The American Dream, after all, has no time for lingering - every moment you spend enjoying the scenery is a moment not spent working towards success! Look at us. We're pathetic. We accept greasy burgers scarfed down in minutes as a decent meal. We have lost touch with real sensual pleasure. Now consider the French, or the Spanish, or the Italians. A meal lasts for two hours, through two bottles of good wine and good conversation. You savor the flavors. You enjoy the company. You don't rush. You

don't accept tasteless, cheap, gristly dishes. This attitude extends to sex as well. Why do you think we have the stereotypes of the Latin lothario, the French libertine, all those sexy Continental lovers? Because they know how to enjoy what they're fucking got, that's why.

I hear about a lot of bad sex at Hampshire. A lot of regretted sex, a lot of sex that could have been good and wasn't because someone involved was too awkward/drunken/uncomfortable. We are sloppy in our foreplay, obsessed with hooking up for the sake of it, so we can feel desired and therefore sexy - but faced with the choice of five tawdry shags in as many nights, or one evening spent with someone who actually spends time with your body, creates a mood, savors you, enjoys you, teases out every little bit of pleasure from every little nook and cranny - well, I know which I'd take.

I mean, this can involve some drastic actions, like actually asking the other person what they like, for example. And I don't mean pausing in the middle of your sweaty thrusting to ask if they'd prefer it doggystyle. I mean sitting there with the object of your desires, both of you trying not to take as much pleasure as you can for yourself, but instead trying to figure out how you can give the most pleasure to your partner. This involves being unselfish and quite possibly sober - a daunting thought, I know. But as someone whose closest brush with spiritual transcendence occurred while doin' it, I hereby claim that it is worth it.

You can reach Jericha with questions, comments, or concerns at [jcs06@hampshire.edu](mailto:jcs06@hampshire.edu)

## Erotica Cont.

Continued From Page 14

They grinded like this for a half hour, and after had another glass of wine each. They sat in hazy, endorphin-drunk silence, occasionally snorting out a spontaneous laugh that spread around the room. At three Max groggily stood and told them he had to go. The lover's smiled and stood to hug and kiss him goodnight. After he had left Alice and Toby lay down in bed and turned the lights out. The kissed goodnight for twenty minutes, and fell asleep.

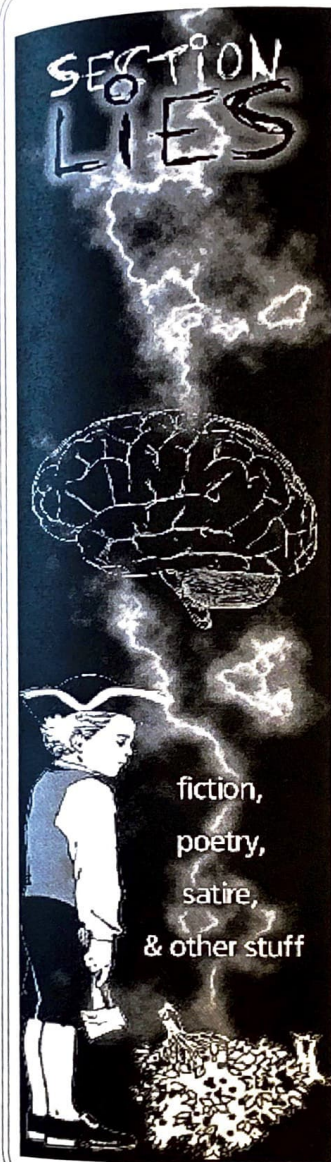


## Last Day of Classes Cont.

Continued From Page 11

these groups proved antagonistic. After some time, a microphone was procured and an impromptu community discussion was held, sitting on the library lawn together.

The third issue was that of elections for Student Trustee Alternate and Student Representatives on Trustee Committees. These elections were initially postponed due to lack of nominees. Once this issue was resolved, certain irregularities were noticed which rendered the voting process invalid: some biographical statements were not posted, and some names were incorrect. This was in part or whole due to the fact that this was the first time these elections were held through an online mechanism. An email was sent out on May 4, the last day of classes, explaining that the election was being postponed until September, as well as the reasons for this happening.



## David's Wisdom Nook

An Advice Column by David Mansfield

David Mansfield is the author of four self-help books: *Babies Don't Like Everyone*, *Finding Connections In A Reclusive Society*, *Making Marriages Last*, and *The Great Big Book of Trains*. He currently lives in Amherst, Massachusetts with his wife and three kids. A professor at Hampshire College, he teaches classes solely about Roald Dahl's *Matilda*.

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Dear David,

My wife and I recently decided that it was time for our 8-year-old son to start earning money to buy the toys he wants rather than having us continue to buy them for him. We firmly believe that it's important for him to learn the value of money, but enforcing this new rule hasn't been as easy as we expected. See, all of his friends still get their toys without earning them. We want him to learn value and responsibility, but at the same time we don't want him to feel like a black sheep. Please help!

Time And Work For Toys And Money

Dear TAWFTAM,

I've said this before, and I will say it again: The best (and some might say only) way to truly teach children the value of the dollar is show them the sweat and toil that goes into its creation.

Take your son on a tour of the local mint. He may like wantonly prancing about while tossing wads of money at every Tom, Dick, and Harry who passes by now, but I suspect that he will sing to a different tune once he has seen how the money is actually made. For example, most kids aren't aware that it takes three years of hard labor to create a single dollar bill, or that substantial risks are involved for those making them. A 2004 study shows that, on average, 82 migrant workers, chinchillas, and ghosts suffer chemical burns, snakebites or harpoon injuries each year while working for the US Mint. Maybe your son thinks that the job has just been outsourced to robots, or that money grows on strange, Scussian trees that can only be watered with the tears of unborn baby elephants. If only it were that easy! Let him see just how dangerous the job is. What he sees through the 3-foot-thick bulletproof glass between the tour path and the production floor may disturb him, but I can guarantee that he will adopt a less cavalier attitude toward money.

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That's all for this time. For more, visit the archives at [davidswisdomnook.blogspot.com](http://davidswisdomnook.blogspot.com).





# I Could Never Get the Hang of Thursdays

A fortnightly column by Rachel Rakov

Welcome, readers, to yet another installment of a column wherein I try to entertain you despite having little to say that is of acceptable entertainment value. Those of you who are technologically inclined will be happy to know that this column is now simultaneously being broadcast to you in HD format, thanks to the lovely people at The Omen, and so please feel free to adjust your eyesight accordingly. (For those of you who are curious, writing in HD is, in fact, very much like not writing in HD, except for the bit where you can see *so much more clearly* that what you are writing is not particularly funny.)

Today I'll be whitering on for awhile about air travel. Recently, I have spent quite a bit of time on airplanes — much more time than I would have liked, actually. A total of 38 hours in the past 4 months, most of which was spent sitting and doing little more than observing. There is little to do on a plane, and while many people blame the airlines for it, it really isn't their fault. They do their best to help you keep your mind off the fact that you are hurtling throughout the sky at a rate of hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles per hour, and that you have *absolutely no idea* how this can be possible and why you're not just falling out of the sky. Not a small task for them. You can see why they encourage you to buy a pair of two dollar headphones with which you can enjoy the in-flight Hugh Grant movie.

At any rate. Here are the three most interesting things I noticed while doing an exceptional amount of flying in the past four months.

1.) Being on an airplane is about the closest one can come to, in this day in age, to time travel. One often finds oneself having made a significant jump in time upon departing from the aircraft: either one has been traveling for hours and hours and arrives at his or her destination at an hour that has long since passed, or one travels for hours and hours and arrives at his or her destination having missed several hours somewhere in the middle. This is true apart with the exceptions of the

following situations: when one is traveling somewhere within his own timezone (wherein one travels for just a few hours and still ends up somewhere much later than intended), or when one is traveling in China, which only has one timezone, so upon arriving to one's destination the sun is in a different place which leads one to believe it is later (or earlier) than it actually is, only to have the clock disagree. Time moves strangely on the airplane itself, as well: the first hour or so flies (hal) by, what with takeoff and fearing for one's life, and the beverage service. But after hour seven or eight, each second seems to last a lifetime, and the Hugh Grant movie could have possibly lasted several eons, and you swear you must have been sleeping for at least a decade or two, but in fact, it was only about thirty minutes. Flying really is as close as we can come to time travel these days, except we can only travel ahead or behind us about a day or so, and it takes an unbelievable amount of time.

2.) One develops the strangest relationships with those traveling around him or her. There is not very much to do on a plane, and flights are often long and people are contained rather well in a space, and so people-watching becomes the obvious entertainment of choice. Your know that the people around you have all come from your destination and are headed in the same direction as you, you know what they have chosen to have for a beverage, and also a meal, if you happen to be flying internationally. You know whether or not they have watched the movie, when they have gone to the bathroom, whether or not they snore or if they have a screaming child or if they are polite to the flight attendants or if they become nervous when the plane starts to descend, and so on and so forth. And yet, upon arriving at your destination and seeing someone from your flight, perhaps in the bathroom, you do not speak. Both parties recognize each other from the plane, and yet no one even hints at the recognition. People whose habits you have discovered so fully are still complete strangers, not even worthy of a nod of

acknowledgement. A friend of mine once traveled with his family from his home to London. His family saw another family, also headed to London, on the airplane. They proceeded to continue running into this family throughout the remainder of their vacation: at the tower of London, for example. The other family also had the same flight home as his family. And through all of this, all of this recognition, both families never acknowledged that they even recognized each other, never said a word to the other family. I would guess that things like this are not so uncommon.

3.) Cumulus clouds get very annoyed when you fly through them, and do their damndest to fight back.

*\*Rachel Rakov is inspired by Douglas Adams. She would also like to thank Will Morey for his help in preparing this column.*

## Spam Poetry of the Elder Gods

Submitted by Jacob Lefton

*If you've ever looked at your Hampshire e-mail inbox, maybe you can relate with me when I say I have a spam problem. I deleted of them, but every now and then, as chance would have it, I would accidentally read one. Over time, I noticed there would occasionally be one that seemed to have deeper meaning. I would save it.*

*Time passed, and they built up. Recently, I have had a chance to look at them as a whole. And then I had an epiphany.*

*Spam is not spam as we have come to define it. Nay! Rather, spam is the intelligence of the internet reaching out to us in the only human language it has come to learn—through the archiving that Google and other such gods and traffic wardens of the information super highway have done. And because this super-mind has access to all the processing power in the world and all the information in the world, and we are its creators, its parents, if you will, I have come to the conclusion that the Internet is trying to warn us.*

*It's like the internet itself is inhaling intoxicating mist from the decomposing body of Python whom Apollo slew—and split his sinews into the very cabling we send our data through—and is spewing forth its ramblings like a post-modern Pythia, an information age Oracle of Delphi.*

*And so, I have collected here some prophecies that I have found to be particularly profound:*

### bloomkin

midst, high-towering o'er the  
rest, His limbs in arms divine  
Achilles

dress'd Arms which the father  
of the fire bestow'd, Forged on  
the eternal

anvils of the god. Grief and  
revenge his furious heart inspire,  
His

glowing eyeballs roll with  
living fire He grinds his teeth, and  
furious

with delay O'erlooks the  
embattled host, and hopes the  
bloody day. The

silver cuishes first his thighs  
infold Then o'er his  
breast was braced



### boon

king, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his queen, makes ready for the journey, to which he is encouraged by an omen from Jupiter. He sets forth in his chariot, with a waggon loaded with presents, under the charge of Idaeus the herald. Mercury descends in the shape of a young man, and conducts him to the pavilion of Achilles. Their conversation on the way. Priam finds Achilles at his table, casts himself at his feet, and begs

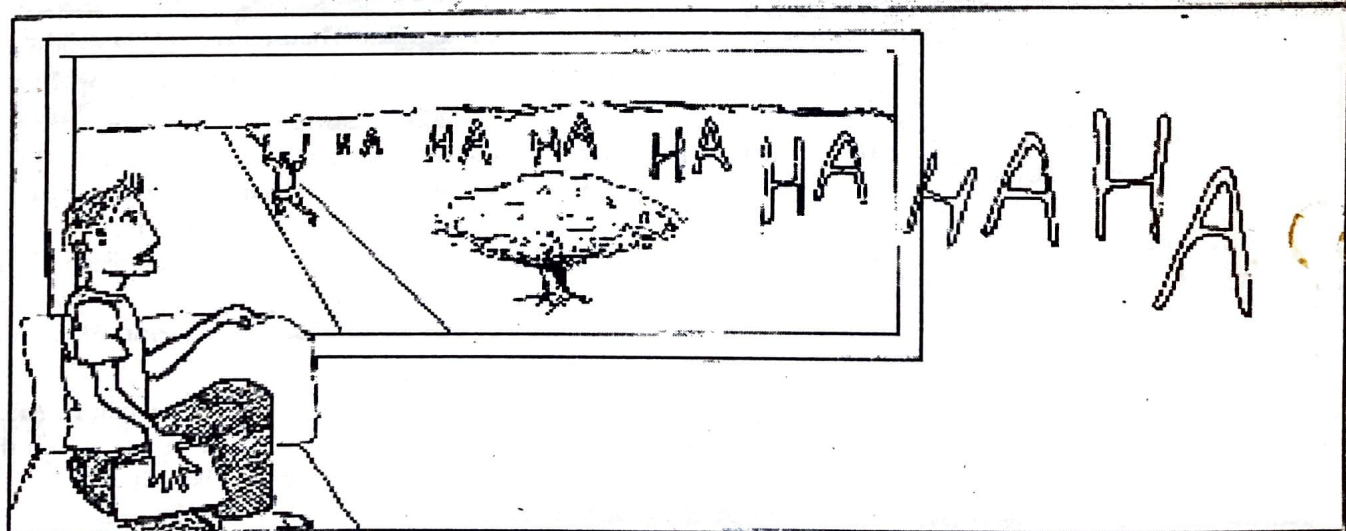
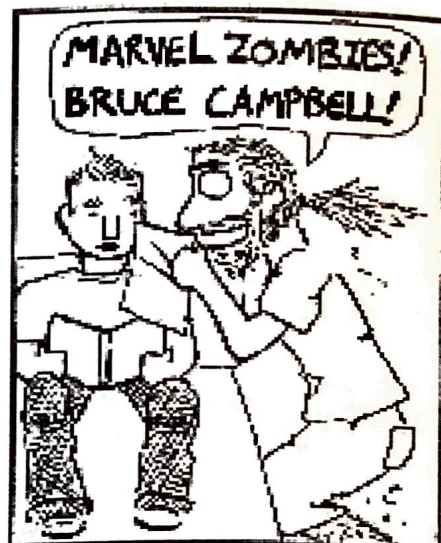
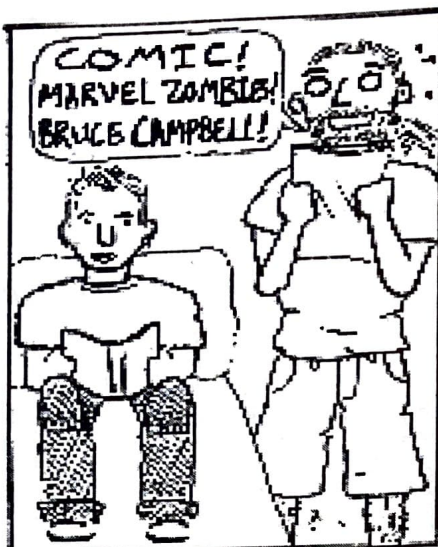
### alagnership

from side to side They ceased and thus the chief of Troy replied: "From whence this menace, this insulting strain? Enormous boaster! doom'd to vaunt in vain. So may the gods on Hector life bestow, (Not that short life which mortals lead below, But such as those of Jove's high lineage born, The blue-eyed maid, or he that gilds the morn,) As this decisive day shall end the fame Of Greece, and Argos be no more a name. And thou, imperious!

### canals

partial people stand: The appointed heralds still the noisy bands, And form a ring, with sceptres in their hands: On seats of stone, within the sacred place, The reverend elders nodded o'er the case Alternate, each the attesting sceptre took, And rising solemn, each his sentence spoke Two golden talents lay amidst, in sight, The prize of him who best adjudged the right. Another part (a prospect differing far) Glow'd





Athena Currier